

NATURAL ATTENUATION: PROOF OF DIVINE DESIGN

James Spencer, M.S., P.G.

[**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following article was written by one of A.P.'s auxiliary staff scientists. James Spencer holds a B.S. degree in Environmental Geology and an M.S. degree in Geology from the University of Mississippi. He has 24 years of technical services in the geosciences, including six years with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, as well as 18 years with private environmental consulting firms. Accredited as a Professional Geologist in three states (Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas), Mr. Spencer holds membership in the Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists. He presently serves as Senior Hydrogeologist with EcoScience Resource Group.]

As a working hydrogeologist, I am constantly reminded of God's handiwork. From the stratigraphic layers examined during drilling operations, to the calculation of groundwater velocities and contaminant transport based on complex governing equations, it is evident that a pre-planned, intentional system is in place. Evolutionists would have us believe that these natural processes have occurred by chance. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that these systems are the work of God. I am reminded of Deuteronomy 3:24—"O Lord God, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds?"

GROUNDWATER & REACTIVE TRANSPORT MODELING FOR REMEDIAL DESIGN

In 1984, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) named a hazardous waste site in the state of Louisiana to the National Priority List (NPL). It was estimated at the time that the site held approximately eight million cubic feet of contaminated materials. A computer model was constructed for the site that would simulate the contaminant movement in the subsurface. Modeling efforts resulted in a successful negotiation with the EPA for monitored natural attenuation as the accepted remediation alternative. ("Natural attenuation" refers to the reduction, weakening, and eventual elimination of toxic substances in the soil and groundwater by nature's own processes.) This EPA determination was a milestone for the site. Previously a pump-and-treat system, which was based on an initial groundwater model developed to simulate hydraulic containment, had cost millions of dollars to install, operate, and maintain. A carbon absorption system was used to treat the contaminated water recovered. By July 1998, over 170 wells were operational.

During this time of recovery well installation in the mid-1990s, field investigations continued in the direction the contaminants were anticipated to flow. Laboratory analysis of water samples discovered the presence of vinyl

chloride (VC)—a compound not present in the parent (original waste) material. At the time, the presence of vinyl chloride confused investigators. After consultation with other governmental agencies, it was assumed that degradation (chemical breakdown) of the parent material was producing vinyl chloride as a daughter product. However, the driving agent of this degradation process, known as reductive dechlorination, was not fully understood. Natural attenuation was discussed, but was not yet an accepted environmental reme-

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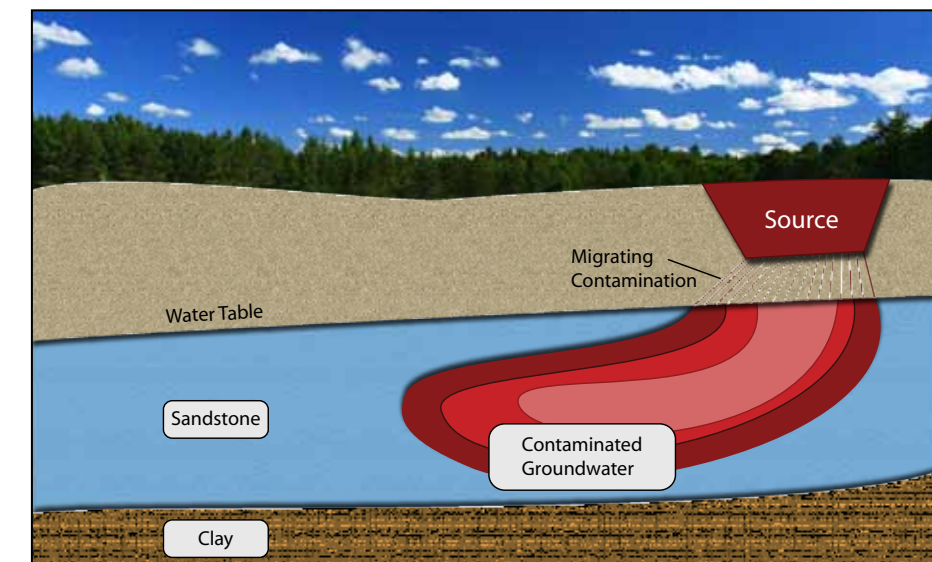
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dial alternative (i.e., clean-up solution) with the regulatory agencies. Change came with the release of a 1999 directive by the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER), titled “Use of Monitored Natural Attenuation at Superfund, RCRA Corrective Action, and Underground Storage Tank Sites.”

As research continued at this site (and others throughout the United States), the degradation process became better understood. Reductive dechlorination is a biological process that is used to describe certain types of biodegradation of chlorinated solvents in groundwater. For example, tetrachloroethene (PCE), trichloroethene (TCE), and other chlorinated aliphatic hydrocarbons in groundwater, can be biodegraded by naturally occurring anaerobic bacteria (i.e., bacteria that are able to live without oxygen), most commonly of the genera *dehalococcoides* through a sequential degradation process. PCE degrades to TCE, TCE to dichloroethene (DCE), DCE to vinyl chloride (VC), and VC to ethene. This biodegradation occurs when anaerobic bacteria present in the contaminated site take electrons from organic compounds (called “electron donors”) and produce H_2 . The dechlorinating bacteria use the electron in the H_2 to replace a chlorine atom.



Conceptual model of contaminant plume flowing from a source area and into the water table



Typical Degradation Pathway of PCE to Ethene

Scientists wanted to substantiate these degradation processes, as well as develop rate constants for the reactive transport model (a computer model to simulate the transport of chemical com-

pounds in groundwater, including the degradation of parent compounds and generation of daughter compounds). With the goal of observing the potential for natural attenuation of the chlorinated ethanes and ethenes present at the site, hydrogeologists conducted microcosm experiments to determine both the pathways and rates of contaminant transformation under natural conditions. The results indicated that the microbial population necessary to dechlorinate contaminants was **naturally present in the site sediments**. With this fact in hand, researchers could now define the degradation pathway.

Researchers then developed a three-dimensional reactive transport model (RT3D—a multi-species reactive flow and transport simulation computer software) for the site, utilizing the results of the microcosm experiments to develop a site-specific reaction package to simulate the degradation processes. The model was calibrated to current conditions in order to make future predictions. Results indicated that the contaminant plume would stabilize over time and no sensitive receptors (i.e., drinking water aquifer, surface water body, etc.) would be impacted. Consequently, the EPA approved monitored natural attenuation as the selected remedial alternative.

Reason & Revelation is published monthly by Apologetics Press, Inc. Periodicals postage paid at Montgomery, AL. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **Reason & Revelation**, 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117; **ISSN:**[1542-0922] **USPS#** 023415.

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(5+ to same address)
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Microbial Population

Researchers conducted laboratory experiments in an attempt to identify, define, and quantify the microbial population present within the site subsurface (see Bae, et al., 2006; Bowman, et al., 2006). These efforts resulted in the identification of several unique microscopic bacteria, known as 16S rRNA gene sequences, that are closely related to *Dehalococcoides ethenogenes*. In addition, two new anaerobic bacterial strains were isolated and identified for the first time, and subsequently named after the site. The data demonstrated that a large number of novel bacteria were present in groundwater within the source zone, and the population appeared to contain bacterial components necessary to carry out reductive dechlorination.

Evolution of Thought

As noted in the above discussion, the “expert” thought has evolved from a pump-and-treat solution to monitored natural attenuation as the accepted remedial alternative at this site. A computer model to simulate the degradation processes was developed for the site to simulate groundwater flow and contaminant transport with a site-specific reaction package. With a better understanding of the degradation processes and bacteria populations providing the driving force, natural attenuation has become an accepted remedial alternative at this site and many contaminated sites throughout the country. Despite increased understanding, scientists have yet to provide a complete and adequate definition of the microbial populations naturally present at all remedial sites.

BUT WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

To recap, in order to develop a computer model to simulate groundwater flow and contaminant transport, scientists must come to a proper understanding of the geologic, hydrologic, and biological processes occurring at the site. This understanding is fundamental when the goal is to develop a defensible strategy

for monitored natural attenuation for presentation to regulatory agencies. Most importantly, **the biologic processes at the Louisiana NPL site have been shown to be active and sufficient for reductive dechlorination of contaminants.** But where did these microbial populations come from? Did they evolve to serve this purpose? Impossible, since, in direct contradiction to the evolutionary hypothesis, they would have had to evolve over a short period of time. After all, the contaminants present were not in existence millions of years ago. For example, PCE is a manufactured chemical compound widely used to dry clean fabrics and degrease metals. Michael Faraday first synthesized it in 1821 by heating hexachloroethane until it decomposed into PCE and chlorine. Since evolution cannot account for their presence, where did these microbes come from?

The only logical explanation is that the Creator of the Earth deliberately embedded restorative properties in the environment in order for it to sustain itself for the Creator's purpose.

For creationists, the answer is simple and obvious. God created these bacteria. Humans did not create this built-in method of breaking down and neutralizing the artificial/synthetic toxic chemicals introduced by humans into the environment. All the efforts of feeble man to decontaminate the hazardous waste site were secondary, perhaps even superfluous, to the naturally occurring attenuation processes already present in the environment. The only logical explanation is that the Creator of the Earth deliberately embedded restorative properties in the environment in order for it to sustain itself for the Creator's purpose. Essentially, all we “educated” humans can do is observe, monitor, document, and assign sophisticated jargon to **what nature**

does automatically. God created His earthly creation to be self-sustaining, restorative, and resilient.

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

In the beginning, God created the Earth to be inhabited by man, and for man to rule the Earth and its resources (Genesis 1:26-30; Psalm 8:6-8). In addition, God placed within the dynamics of the Earth the processes by which He sustains it. The microbial populations that we scientists are just now identifying, and whose purpose we are just now beginning to understand, were created by God to sustain His creation. It is certainly true that man has made mistakes that have been detrimental to God's Earth. However, it is also true that God is in control, and no matter what humans do—accidentally or purposefully—that may be harmful to the environment, God will sustain this Earth until it has served **His** purpose! “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Hebrews 11:3).

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The Nature of Bible Inspiration

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

What does it mean to say: “The Bible is inspired”? Answers to this question are legion. Some regard the Bible as “inspired” in the same way that great authors in history have risen above the average person in their literary pursuits, e.g., Homer, Shakespeare, Dickens, or Eliot. Others would say that the writers of the Bible were influenced by supernatural connections, but that their written records of those connections suffer from the same flaws that mere humans are prone to make. Many people fail to assess the Bible’s own claims regarding its inspiration. Before the Bible can be determined to be “inspired,” it is necessary to conceptualize the meaning and nature of that inspiration. The Bible is literally filled with descriptions of the essence of its own inspiration.

Paul boldly claimed, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16). The Greek term underlying the word “inspiration” means “God-breathed” (Vincent, 1900, 4:317). Paul was affirming that Scripture, primarily the Old Testament, is the product of the breath of God. God actually breathed out the Scriptures. The Bible is **God’s Word**—not man’s—though He used man to produce it. Three verses later (4:2), Paul declared, “Therefore...preach the word...” Why? Because it is **God’s Word**. Just as surely as God’s breath brought the Universe into existence (Psalm 33:6), so the Bible is the result of God’s out-breathing.

Peter alluded to the momentous occasion of Christ’s transfiguration when God literally spoke from heaven directly to Peter, James, and John (2 Peter 1:19-

21). God orally boomed forth His insistence that Jesus is His beloved Son, and human beings are commanded to hear Him (Matthew 17:5). Peter then declared, “We also have the prophetic word made more sure,...knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.” Peter was saying that the Scriptures provided to us by the prophets are just as certain, and just as authoritative, as the voice of God that spoke audibly on the mount of transfiguration.

Peter further explained that the prophetic word, meaning the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, did not originate on its own, or in the minds of those who wrote them (the meaning of “private interpretation”). Scripture did not

*Just as surely as God’s breath
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come from “the will of man.” Scripture was not the result of human research or human investigation into the nature of things. Scripture was not the product of its writers’ own thinking. Where, then, did Scripture come from? Peter claimed, “but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” The word “moved” in the original language is the usual word for being “carried” or “brought” (Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, pp. 862-863), hence, to be moved or be under a moving influence (Perschbacher, 1990, p. 427). Peter was stating that the Holy Spirit, in essence, **picked up** the writers, the prophets, and brought them to the goal of **His** choosing. This means that the Scriptures, though written by means of hu-

*...the Scriptures, though written by
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This same Peter, while awaiting the coming of the Spirit in Acts 2 on Pentecost, stood up among fellow disciples and declared, “Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas,” and then he quoted from the Psalms (Acts 1:16ff.). Peter affirmed that the Holy Spirit governed what David wrote, and the results of David’s writing therefore are designated as “Scripture.”

This same Peter, in 1 Peter 1:10-12, explained: (1) that the inspired spokesmen of the Old Testament did not always understand all the information given by God through them; (2) it was the Spirit of Christ that was operating upon them; (3) this same inspired information was being presented in Peter’s day by the apostles; and (4) the same Holy Spirit was directing their utterances. It is very important to note that Peter was claiming that inspired men had **their own minds engaged** as they produced inspired material, but **the product was God’s**, since they did not always grasp all of the significance of their own productions.

This same Peter, in 2 Peter 3:15-16, referred to “our beloved brother Paul” as having “written to you.” He then noted: “as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable

*The Bible is literally filled with
descriptions of the essence
of its own inspiration.*

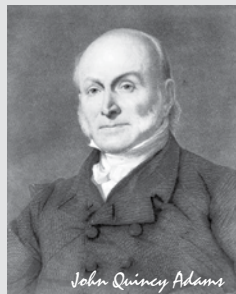
The Founders: Atheists & Deists, or Theists & Christians?

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

Since the 1960s, widespread misconceptions regarding the religious orientation of the Founders of the American Republic have prevailed. The prevailing propaganda suggests that most of the Founders were either atheists and religionless at most, or deists at the very least. Deism is currently defined as: "The belief, based solely on reason, in a God who created the universe and then abandoned it, assuming no control over life, exerting no influence on natural phenomena, and giving no supernatural revelation" (*American Heritage*..., 2000, p. 479). This assessment of the Founders' beliefs is so thoroughly embedded in societal consensus that the one who questions it is immediately discounted as an ignorant fool.

But the real ignorance is seen in the misrepresentation of American history and the successful perpetration of one of the big myths of our time. Immediately after World War II, revisionist historians, who seem to have possessed an ardent hostility toward Christianity, were determined to expunge the role that God, the Bible, and the Christian religion played in the founding of America. Nevertheless, an honest seeker of truth may overcome their big myth by simply returning to the original documents. That seeker will be overwhelmed with the magnitude of the Founders' reliance on and commitment to God and Christianity.

Take, as one of a myriad of examples, an address delivered by an early President of the United States, John Quincy Adams. Not only did John Quincy live during the founding era (born in 1767), not only was his father a primary, quintessential Founder, but John Quincy was literally nurtured by his father in the vicissitudes and intricacies of the founding of the Republic. John Adams involved his son at an early age in his own activities and travels in behalf of the fledgling nation. John Quincy accompanied his father to France in 1778, became Secretary to the American Minister to Russia, was the Secretary to his father during the peace negotiations that ended the American Revolution in 1783, served as U.S. foreign ambassador, both to the Netherlands and later to Portugal, under George Washington, to Prussia under his father's presidency, and then to Russia and later to England under President James Madison. He served as a U.S. Senator, and then Secretary of State under President James Monroe, and



then as the nation's sixth President (1825-1829), and finally as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, where he was a staunch and fervent opponent of slavery.

Here was a man whose long and distinguished career in behalf of his country was virtually unparalleled. He was sufficiently intimate with the founding era to know whereof he spoke. **He was there**—and his life not only spanned the founding era, but was intricately intertwined with the circumstances surrounding the birth of the country. While Secretary of State, in a July 4, 1821 speech to the citizens of the nation's capital in Washington, John Quincy Adams articulated a penetrating summary of the theological beliefs of the Founders:

From the day of the Declaration, the people of the North American Union and of its constituent States, were associated bodies of civilized men **and Christians**, in a state of nature; but not of Anarchy. They were bound by **the laws of God, which they all**, and by **the laws of the Gospel, which they nearly all**, acknowledged as the rules of their conduct (1821, p. 26, emp. added).

Observe: this well-qualified eye-witness to and participant in the founding of the Republic claimed that **all** of the Founders believed in the God of the Bible. **Not an atheist among them!** He further claimed that **nearly all**—the vast majority—of the Founders also believed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Christian religion. Case closed. So who should we believe? The ACLU, the NEA, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, revisionist historians, liberal politicians, activist judges, and socialist educators—or John Quincy Adams?

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For several years, the mainstream scientific community has been trying to dupe the public into believing that dinosaurs evolved into birds. The dinosaur-to-bird theory is patently false, and the “evidence” for it continues to be, not only extremely tenuous, but oftentimes fraudulent.

Recently the public was introduced to *Epidexipteryx hui*. The *Live Science* article described this creature as a “bird-like dinosaur” that “sport[ed] bizarre tail feathers” (Bryner, 2008). This little six-ounce, pigeon-sized creature supposedly gives us new insight into the fact that dinosaurs evolved into birds. Yet a cursory look at the article describing the find shows the uncertainty and faulty assumptions packed into such a conclusion. Bryner, the author of the article, noted that the scientists “are not positive about the dates.” She further noted that researcher Zhonghe Zhou said the creature “cannot be the direct ancestor of birds.”

In addition, Bryner wrote that the “tail feathers” sported by this creature are unlike any feathers any person has ever seen. In fact, Mark Norell, a paleontologist at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, commented on the alleged tail feathers: “These seem to lack that main shaft down the middle and are just a really long collection of very long, filamentous-like structures” (as quoted

in Bryner, 2008). Norell added: “Things more primitive than this [dinosaur] have fully formed feathers. This is just some weirdo kind of thing this animal has” (2008).

In summary, then, a dinosaur that scientists cannot accurately date, which cannot be an ancestor to birds, has some strange filaments unlike any feathers that any scientist has ever seen protruding from its tail. Other creatures supposedly older than this animal have fully formed feathers, yet this little guy allegedly “fills in the gaps about the transition from non-avian dinosaurs to birds” (2008). With all due respect, that is ridiculous. The cold, hard truth of the matter is scientists have never found an animal that is part-dinosaur/part-bird, and they never will. Not only does the biblical record prove that land-living dinosaurs were created **after** birds (Genesis 1), but the law of Biogenesis precludes the possibility of a “transitional” creature.

Kyle Butt

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PUBLIC DEBATE

Proposition:

I Know that the God of the Bible Does Not Exist

Affirm: Dan Barker

Co-president, Freedom from Religion Foundation
Former charismatic preacher turned atheist
Frequent debater (over 60 formal debates)
Author of *Losing Faith in Faith* and *Godless*

Deny: Kyle Butt

Apologetics Press
Gospel Preacher, author, lecturer
M.A. (Freed-Hardeman University)
Editor of *Discovery*, Associate Editor of *Reason & Revelation*
Author of *Out With Doubt* and *Behold! The Word of God*
Co-author of *Behold! The Lamb of God* and *Surveying the Evidence*

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twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.” Peter made clear three salient points: (1) Paul wrote epistles; (2) those epistles are classified with “the other Scriptures,” which means that Paul’s letters are **Scripture** every bit as much as the Old Testament and other New Testament writings; and (3) these writings are divinely authoritative, since to twist them is to invite “destruction”—an obvious reference to **God’s** disfavor and the spiritual/eternal harm that results from disobeying **God’s** words—not man’s words.

While on Earth, Jesus demonstrated a high regard for Scripture, i.e., the Old Testament. On one occasion, He involved Himself in an interchange with some Jews who accused Him of blasphemy (John 10:33). He repelled the charge by quoting Psalm 82:6, referring to the passage as “**law**” (vs. 34). But how could Jesus refer to a psalm as “law,” since the Psalms were poetic wisdom literature and not a part of the Pentateuch? He referred to a psalm as “law” in the sense that the Psalms are part of Scripture. Jesus was thus ascribing **legal authority** to the entire corpus of Scripture. He did the same thing in John 15:25. Likewise, Paul quoted from the Psalms, Isaiah, and Genesis and referred to each as “the Law” (1 Corinthians 14:21; Romans 3:19; Galatians 4:21).

After Jesus quoted from a psalm and called it “law,” He added, “and the Scripture cannot be broken” (vs. 35). Notice that He was equating “law” with “Scripture”—using the terms as synonyms. When He declared that “law,” or “Scripture,” “cannot be broken,” He was making the point that it is impossible for Scripture to be annulled, for its authority to be denied, or its truth to be withstood. Jesus considered every part of Scripture, even its most casual phrases, to be the authoritative Word of God.

Jesus considered every part of Scripture, even its most casual phrases, to be the authoritative Word of God.

This attitude toward Scripture as an authoritative document is intimated by the customary formula: “It is written.” For example, when facing Satan, Jesus repelled all three of his attacks with a simple, “It is written,” which was sufficient to establish authoritative credibility (Matthew 4:4,7,10)—so much so that Satan attempted to copy Jesus in this respect (Matthew 4:6). After His resurrection, Jesus equated the entire Old Testament (i.e., the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms) with “Scripture,” and again noted “it is writ-

ten” (Luke 24:44-46). He insisted very emphatically that “all things” in the Scriptures concerning Himself “must be fulfilled.” Earlier in the chapter, He equated “Moses and all the prophets” with “the Scriptures” (vss. 25-27).

No wonder Jesus would rebuke His religious challengers with such phrases as, “Have you not read even this Scripture?” (Mark 12:10; cf. Matthew 21:42); or, “You do err, not knowing the Scriptures” (Matthew 22:29); or, “if you had known what this means...” (Matthew 12:7); or, “Go and learn what this means...” (Mark 9:13). The underlying thought in such pronouncements is that **God’s truth is found in Scripture**, and if you are ignorant of the Scriptures, you are susceptible to error. Jesus therefore affirmed that God is the Author of Scripture.

Even the words of Scripture that do not constitute direct quotes of deity are, in fact, the words of God. For example, Jesus assigned the words of Genesis 2:24 to God as the author (Matthew 19:4-6). Yet, in the original setting of Genesis 2:24, no indication is given that God was the speaker. Rather, the words are simply narratorial comment written down by the human author—Moses. By attributing the words to God, Jesus made clear that the whole of Scripture was authored by God. That means that even the words of Satan, or the words of evil people, are the words of God—in the sense that God has given us an accurate report of what those people said. Paul treated the matter in the same way (1 Corinthians 6:16).

Over and over again, the apostles and writers of the New Testament did the same thing that Jesus did, i.e., they referred to Scripture in such a way that it was clear they considered it to be the authoritative, inspired words of God (e.g., Acts 8:35; 17:2; 18:28; 26:22; Romans 12:19; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 Peter 1:16; James 2:8). Perhaps Luke well summarized the prevailing mindset of the Bible writers: “...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, to find

SPEAKING SCHEDULES

Kyle Butt

December 5-7	St. George, SC	(843) 563-4820
January 9-11	Mathis, TX	(361) 547-2016

Eric Lyons

December 28-29	Huntsville, AL	(334) 272-2501
January 23-25	Gainesboro, TN	(931) 268-0560

Dave Miller

December 5-7	Lake Norman, NC	(704) 895-1155
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out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). In other words, **what Scripture says, God says.**

Additional evidence of the Bible's own view of itself is manifested in statements like, "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh" (Romans 9:17), or "And the Scripture...preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand" (Galatians 3:8). But Scripture did not speak to Pharaoh, and Scripture did not preach the Gospel to Abraham. Rather, God did! So the word of Scripture is the word of God! The inspired writers of the New Testament considered "God" and "Scripture" to be so closely aligned that they could naturally speak of "Scripture" doing what Scripture records God as doing.

It works the other way as well. God is said to say certain things that are, in their original setting, merely words of Scripture. For example, Hebrews 3:7 reads, "Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says..." and Psalm 95:7 is then quoted. In Acts 4:25, God is said to have spoken,

...what Scripture says, God says.

by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David, the words of Psalm 2:1. In Acts 13:34-35, God is represented as having stated the words of Isaiah 55:3 and Psalm 16:10. Yet, in both of these verses, the words attributed to God are not, in their original setting, specifically His words, but merely the words of Scripture itself. So we conclude the writers of the New Testament sometimes referred to the Scriptures as if they were God, and they sometimes referred to God as if He were Scripture. The Bible thereby presents itself as the very words of God.

In Hebrews 1:5-13, the writer quotes seven Old Testament passages: Psalm 2:7, 2 Samuel 7:14, Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalm 104:4, Psalm 45:6-7, Psalm 102:25-27, and Psalm 110:1. The Hebrews writer attributed each of these passages to God as the speaker. Yet in their original setting in the Old Testament, sometimes God **is** the speaker,

So inspiration involves the very words, and that makes it verbal inspiration.

while sometimes He is **not** the speaker, and is, in fact, being spoken **to** or **about**. Why would the writer of Hebrews indiscriminately assign all of these passages to God? Because they all have in common the fact that they are the words of Scripture, and, as such, are the words of God.

The same is true with Romans 15:9-12 where Paul quoted from Psalm 18:49, Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalm 117:1, and Isaiah 11:10. He introduced the first one with the formula "as it is written;" the second one is introduced by "again he says;" the third with simply "again;" and the fourth is prefaced with "Isaiah says." Yet, in the Old Testament setting, only in the Isaiah passage is God Himself talking—and Paul assigns those words to Isaiah. So "it is written," "he says," and "Isaiah says," are all different ways of saying the same thing, i.e., "**God** says"! Sometimes the New Testament writers assigned Scripture to its human authors. Yet it is clear that when the writers said, "Moses said," or "David said," such was simply another way to say, "Scripture says," which, again, was the same thing as saying "**God** says."

VERBAL INSPIRATION

Notice that the inspiration that the Bible claims for itself is "**verbal**" inspiration, i.e., God's superintendence extended even to the **words** of the writ-

The inspired writers of the New Testament considered "God" and "Scripture" to be so closely linked that they could naturally speak of "Scripture" doing what Scripture records God as doing.

er. For instance, in Galatians 3:16, Paul based his argument on a plural noun, and insisted that God intended the word to be understood in its singular sense. As noted previously, Jesus based an argument on the precise verbal form of Psalm 82:6 (John 10:34). He based His point on a particular **word** in Matthew 22:43, on a particular **tense** in Matthew 22:32, and even on the **letters** and their minute strokes in Matthew 5:17-18. In the latter passage, Jesus said that Exodus 3:6 was spoken to the Sadducees with whom He was conversing—even though the original context of Exodus 3:6 has God speaking to Moses! This proves that Jesus expects all people on Earth to understand that the Bible is written to every single accountable human being, and that Scrip-



ture is intended to be **authoritative** for human living.

Paul also affirmed verbal inspiration in 1 Corinthians 2. He claimed that his speech and his preaching were not "words of human wisdom" (vs. 4). Rather, his words were "in demonstration of the Spirit" (vs. 4). He claimed that he and his fellow apostles were speaking the wisdom of God (vs. 7). He claimed that the things which they had been speaking were revealed to them by God through the Holy Spirit (vs. 10). Then he affirmed very clearly: "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches" (vs. 13). So inspiration involves the very **words**, and that makes it **verbal** inspiration.

NEW TESTAMENT INSPIRATION

Most of the passages examined thus far are New Testament references to the inspiration of the Old Testament. Liberal scholars have claimed that the New Testament does not make the claim of inspiration for itself. That claim is preposterous. As already noted, in 2 Peter 3:16, Peter classified Paul's epistles as "Scripture," and he affirmed that Paul's writings carry such divine authority that those who twist them will be destroyed. It also was noted that Peter linked the apostles with the Old Testament prophets (1 Peter 1:10-12). And, as just seen, Paul made a comparable claim in 1 Corinthians 2.

As one reads the New Testament, it is clear that the writers made the extension of Old Testament inspiration to their own writings. They did not for a moment consider themselves—the ministers of the new covenant (2 Corinthians 3:6)—to possess less of the Spirit of God than the ministers of the old covenant. Indeed, Jesus, without question, declared the impending inspiration of the authors of the New Testament. In Matthew 10:17-20, and the parallels in Mark 13:11 and Luke 12:12, Jesus explained to the apostles that the Holy Spirit would direct their verbal activities in terms of both **how** and **what** they spoke. He reiterated the same thing in Luke 21:12-15, urging them not to worry how to defend themselves when hauled before the authorities, since He would provide them with "a mouth and wisdom" that their adversaries would not be able to withstand. So Jesus **pre-authenticated** the teaching of the apostles, and ensured respect for their inspired authority.

Jesus made several guarantees of inspiration to the apostles in John chapters 14, 15, and 16. Allusion to just one of these will suffice. Jesus promised the apostles: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own

authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:12-13). Just prior to His ascension, Jesus promised to the apostles the impending baptism of the Holy Spirit, which would enable them to be Christ's witnesses throughout the world (Acts 1:5,8). This promise commenced its fulfillment in Acts 2 when the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit and empowered to preach the message God wanted preached.

Numerous passages indicate the fulfillment of these promises to the apostles to the extent that the words which they spoke were **God's** words (Acts 4:8,31; 5:32; 15:8,27-28; 16:6-8). As already noted, Paul claimed direct guidance of the Holy Spirit for the words that he spoke (1 Corinthians 2). He did the same thing in Galatians 1:12. In Ephesians 3:1-5, he claimed that his message was made known to him "by

Jesus pre-authenticated the teaching of the apostles, and ensured respect for their inspired authority.

revelation" (vs. 3), along with the other apostles and prophets (vs. 5). Other passages reflect the same point (1 Timothy 4:1; Galatians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). A good summary of Paul's claims to inspiration is seen in his firm declaration: "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that **the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord**" (1 Corinthians 14:37, emp. added). His inspiration extended to both his **oral** utterances as well as his **writings** (2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6,14; cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:2,15; Galatians 1:7-8). In 1 Timothy 5:8, Paul quoted Luke 10:7 and referred to it as "Scripture." So Luke's gospel record was already available and classified with the inspired canon of Scripture.

CONCLUSION

The unbiased individual can easily see that the Bible claims for itself the status of inspiration, having been breathed out by God Himself. This inspiration entailed such superintendence by God that even the words came under His influence. Thus the Bible is "verbally inspired." This conclusion does not imply that the writers merely took "dictation." Rather, the Bible indicates that God adapted His inspiring activity to the individual temperament, vocabulary, educational level, and stylistic idiosyncrasies of each writer. The Bible is "infallible" in that it is incapable of deceiving or misleading, and is therefore completely trustworthy and reliable. "Plenary" inspiration means that inspiration extends to all of its parts. Thus the Bible is fully inspired.

The Bible is also "inerrant," that is, it is free of error. God used human beings to write the Bible, and in so doing, allowed them to leave their mark upon it, but without making any of the mistakes that human writings are prone to make. God made certain that the words produced by the human writers were free from the errors and mistakes characteristic of uninspired writers. This influence even extended to matters of science, geography, and history. Proof for the inspiration of the Bible is a separate and necessary inquiry (see Butt, 2007). However, it is important that a person understand what the Bible means when it claims for itself "inspiration."

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

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